

NO BELL SHOULD EVER RING AGAIN

A great one
gone down into the ground
and no mention made,
a great one
gone down and I can't understand why
the flies continue to crawl the walls
and the roses continue to open
and the lovers to join lips in first kisses,
I don't understand
this world,
I want
the sun to stop moving and all
the tvs off and not one newspaper headline printed,
I want
the trucks and planes and ships stopped,
all the people out of their rooms and in the streets,
all the main control panel switches to all the machines in all the
factories
turned off,
Marvin Malone is dead
and no mention made,
let the pens refuse to move in the poets' hands
and the sunset never come
and the poets choke to death on their own ambition
until mention is made,
let the trees begin to die
and the waters stop flowing
and the children stop smiling,
a great one
has gone down into the ground
and God
does not seem so good
nor bread
nor wine,
because Marvin Malone is dead
and no mention made.

I will never forget that first 5x7" piece of paper that I received
from Marvin Malone in that special strong and earnest hand-

writing in red ink, or the jolt of encouragement it sent through me. The 4 poems I had sent in my first submission to the WORMWOOD REVIEW were returned, but something about the encouragement in that letter made me not care, made me know there were many more poems to pour out of my pen, somehow put me on my feet as a writer and told me those 7 novels I had written and never published had been worth it.

The next day WORMWOOD 101 arrived in the mail gratis, and I read it in my 1915 Long Beach apartment and in my car in the parking lot as my wash tumble dried in the Laundromat, read it between shifts at the aircraft plant where I had somehow ended up making bombers that could blow up the world but in fact simply drained the U.S. taxpayer, and somehow my life began to have a meaning it had never had before.

And WORMWOOD was a legend in Long Beach, with the shadow of all Bukowski's readings in peanut-strewn bars still fallen across it, and all the great Bukowski poems gracing WORMWOOD for all those years from the beginning of his career up until the very now of then, and so many Long Beach poets reading on the peanut-strewn bar floors having been captured on the magical WORMWOOD REVIEW pages, poets like Gerald Locklin, Joan Jobe Smith, Ray Zepeda, R. Vargas, Kirk Robertson, David Barker, and many more, including my friend the Englishwoman Nichola Manning, who rode her motorcycle in a black leather jacket and created poems of surrealist humor and magic out of the mean streets of Long Beach. WORMWOOD was all of these, but more than anything else it was Marvin Malone, whom no one apparently had ever seen in the flesh but who had created a fabled place of magic on pages somewhere up north in a place called Stockton.

And then I got on those pages, and Marvin Malone began a steady interest in my poems, selecting them in a way that led me down a path to finding my true subject matter, the machine shop. And even getting a free flight to England and a reading tour there because of the power of WORMWOOD.

And finally one day I met the man in the flesh. He said, "Hi, Fred," across an auditorium before I was even sure it was him, and we ended up talking over sandwiches in the Blue Cafe with my wife Joan and Ray Zepeda, and in a strange way it seemed I had known all my life this quiet man none of us had ever seen.

My father was one of the greatest men I have ever met, but in some way in my memory Marvin Malone has to be a father

as great but of a different kind, a man who gave such wisdom to my soul that was still lost, who simply and graciously handed me a gift I can never repay.

Not that he would want me to. Not that he didn't have his reward, the father of all of us.

And it seems the good among us do die young, the good so very, very rare and beautiful.

—Fred Voss

Long Beach, CA

DEAR EDITOR:

Marvin: Right above my typewriter is the first acceptance note from you for poems I submitted to WORMWOOD, hand-printed on a plain piece of white notebook paper, and I am so proud of that piece of paper, and I will never forget how exciting it was to have my work accepted and eventually printed alongside some of the best poets in this country, and I shall never forget the time you took to carefully read and respond to each submission I sent to you and how I felt as though I was corresponding with a long-known friend as well as an editor. You are not gone, Marvin. You live in each issue of WORMWOOD REVIEW, your stamp as editor alive in each poem printed over all those decades. I can only express my deep appreciation for your incredible contribution to poetry as I say good-bye to WORMWOOD, but I shall not say good-bye to you because each time I pick up an issue of the mag and open it, you are there in those pages. It is not good-bye, Marvin, it is hello again, my friend tonight as I read over one of the Bukowski WORMWOOD chaps I just pulled from the shelf, and I will say hello tomorrow too.

—Gary Goude

Riverside, CA